

Autumn Internationals: Ospreys Aim to Keep Morgan and Lake

Both players are nearing the end of their contracts this season and have been linked with a potential move away from the region. Morgan, 25, was the only Welsh representative in the British and Irish Lions' series-winning squad in Australia, while Lake, 26, captained Wales during their summer tour of Japan ahead of the Autumn Internationals 2025.

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I am hopeful they will choose to remain with Ospreys, and I'm even more certain we want them here, said Jones. The signals we've received from me and the management are clear: we want them to stay as key members of our squad. However, they are individuals who will ultimately make their own decisions. We're doing everything possible to retain them.

The ongoing discussions behind the scenes remain encouraging, though Jones acknowledged that players will make their own choices. Lake is reportedly being pursued by English clubs, while Morgan has been linked with the new breakaway R360 league, a topic gaining attention ahead of the Autumn Internationals.

Rugby's national governing bodies this week combined to deliver a major setback to the proposed competition, declaring that any player joining it would be excluded from Test selection. A joint statement from all Six Nations unions, except Wales,

was highly critical of the rebel tournament, urging extreme caution to anyone considering signing up.

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South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia also endorsed the declaration. The Welsh Rugby Union (WRU), currently restructuring its domestic setup, expressed support for the statement but stopped short of confirming that players would be banned from national duty. Instead, Welsh rugby's governing body stated it reserves the right to withhold selection for international play if athletes are involved in R360.



Reports suggest that up to 200 players have already signed pre-contracts valued at £750,000, although none have made their involvement public. Furthermore, there are no confirmed details about who is funding the event, though R360 sources remain confident of its launch next year. I'm not fully up to date with how far R360 has progressed regarding authorization, said Jones.

To my knowledge, it hasn't yet received official approval from World Rugby, so I'm unsure if it currently poses any threat. We simply want to ensure that we are working closely with the WRU to secure our players for both the regions and the national team, keeping them in Wales. The R360 still feels like blue-sky thinking right now, with limited details available.

He admitted he is waiting for the WRU's decision regarding the future of the professional game in Wales. The union plans to announce its domestic revamp by the end of October, which could result in reducing the four professional sides to two, a move that could significantly impact preparations ahead of the Autumn Internationals 2025.

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Morgan has already informed the WRU that he will depart Wales if the Ospreys are disbanded. It's challenging because while we know who we want to retain in Wales and who our priorities are at Ospreys, without a defined budget, it's difficult to make concrete offers, Jones explained. The collaboration with the WRU around the players we want to keep has been excellent.

There's strong alignment between both parties, and they also recognize how vital these players are to Welsh rugby. There's a significant amount of communication happening with agents and the players themselves. I'm directly involved in identifying who we need to retain, but the financial aspect is managed by those handling the budgets.



Morgan has not appeared for Ospreys since returning from the Lions' triumphant tour of Australia last summer. The Ospreys captain had been expected to travel to

South Africa for the second week of their United Rugby Championship trip, where they suffered defeats to the Bulls and Stormers, a period that coincides with growing anticipation for the Wales Vs Argentina Tickets showdown.

Morgan sustained a minor calf strain during WRU fitness testing and will now also miss the home fixture against Zebre in Bridgend this Saturday. Jones hopes Morgan will be available for the next home game against Glasgow on 18 October and is confident he'll be fit for the Welsh derby against the Dragons in Newport seven days later.

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